

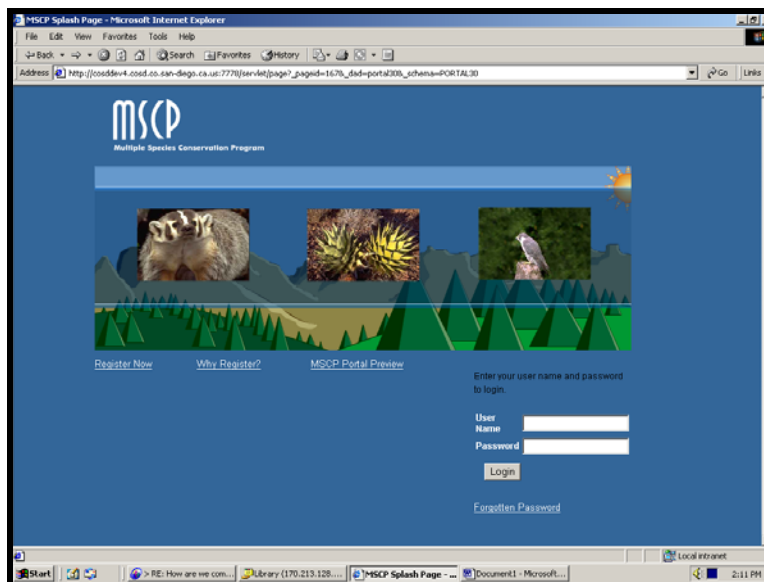
## MSCP - PORTAL TO PRESERVATION

Announcing the World Wide Web Debut of the groundbreaking and powerful MSCP Portal! Taking full advantage of the latest web technologies, the MSCP Portal introduces a one-stop shopping approach for information about any facet of the MSCP while meeting MSCP organizational goals. The County's Land Use and Environment Group (LUEG) General Manager, Robert R. Copper, is leading the effort with support from County MSCP staff from the Departments of Planning and Land Use and Parks and Recreation, the County Technology Office and Pennant Alliance, the County's technology provider. By leveraging the County's previous infrastructure investments, the Portal also serves as a prototype for county-wide customer-facing internet portals. Potentially a national-level conservation resource, the Portal is visually impressive and integrates a wide array of valuable information with state-of-the-art online functionality.

What makes the MSCP Portal different from our current MSCP web site? Visitors will be able to affiliate themselves with a user group if they choose. A user's group membership determines which portal features are initially presented to them to quickly access information of interest to that specific group.

A second significant user personalization function is the ability to create a "My MSCP" page tailored to individual interests and needs. All functions are designed for ease of user interface with "Portal Help" features to assist the user in a short amount of time.

An extremely powerful search engine, known as a "web crawler" will not only search MSCP Portal content, but content of MSCP-designated external websites; for example, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, California Department of Fish and Game and the Environmental Protection Agency. Type in a keyword and the search feature does all the work for you! It lists documents containing the "search term" on a Search Results page and even highlights the "search term" within PDF documents or on website pages.



Phase Two of the MSCP Portal, scheduled for deployment in the near future, includes more interactive functions, such as a Photo Gallery and "Subscription Service" for state and federal legislative actions and grant opportunities. Of prime importance to many MSCP website visitors is specific parcel location in relation to MSCP areas. This information will be accessible by simply typing in the as-

essor parcel number and reviewing a variety of habitat, species and landscape images.

By combining extensive MSCP species, habitat, and other vital information with the latest portal technologies including user group registration, personalization and advanced search capabilities, the County of San Diego MSCP is certain it is creating a valuable, national-level resource for its stakeholders. The date of our MSCP Portal Debut will be posted on the current MSCP website at [www.mscp-sandiego.org](http://www.mscp-sandiego.org). Be sure you log on to check out our new look!



## EXPLORING A GRASSLAND BIOME: A SCIENCE UNIT COMES TO LIFE

By Ann Pierce, Back Country Land Trust



*Wright's Field offers students a hands-on learning opportunity.*

Alpine students at the new Joan MacQueen Middle School explored their "Biomes" science unit in an entirely unique manner last spring. The students, teamed with parent volunteers trained by the Back Country Land Trust (BCLT), left the classroom for an in-depth study of a Grassland Biome.

They didn't have far to travel. The Mesa del Arroz Preserve, known to the community as Wright's Field, is just outside their door. This 80-acre preserve, a joint project of the Back Country Land Trust, the County of San Diego and the Alpine Union School District, offered students a hands-on learning opportunity as they literally watched their science curriculum come to life. Armed with standards-based field guides created by BCLT volunteer educators, students became ornithologists, zoologists, botanists or entomologists for the week. While one team identified tracks and collected scat, another conducted a bird survey. As the young botanists learned about the uniqueness and value of native grassland plant spe-

cies, entomologists marveled at the amazing variety and vitality in insect life. Students became experts on biotic and abiotic factors and their affects on the environment. The impact of drought on the biome was obvious and a nearby fire offered students the opportunity to hypothesize on just how powerful abiotic factors can be.

Upon returning to the classroom, students analyzed data, performed lab experiments and made oral presentations to the other groups. All students culminated their experience with an owl pellet dissection. As a BCLT board member, it was exciting to see students connecting with the natural environment. You could almost see the wheels turning as students speculated on the history of the field's culturally significant Spanish-Colonial rock wall. Students who previously used the field to ride three-wheelers observed how off-road vehicle activity has affected vernal pool habitat and caused serious erosion on the site and eagerly volunteered to change their behavior.

Experiences such as this further our goal of promoting conservation of the environment to the next generation. If you have a grassland biome in your community or are interested in this program, please contact Noelle Collins at the Back Country Land Trust at (619) 590-2258 or visit our website at [www.bclt.org](http://www.bclt.org).

## THE POWER OF COLLABORATION

By Don Hunsaker III, The Environmental Trust



Merle Okino O'Neill, the Director of Communities Alive in Nature (CAN), called me in February requesting assistance with an educational program in North County. CAN, an applied environmental science, math, language arts and technology program, is a school-based program currently

implemented in several San Diego County schools. Merle was working with teachers at Jefferson Elementary in Carlsbad, and she needed a local site

with native habitat to take their fourth and fifth grade students.

The Environmental Trust (TET) offered the use of its Calavera Nature Preserve, a 110-acre preserve, owned and managed by TET. TET along with the County of San Diego, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Wildlife Refuge System, the California Department of Fish and Game and other cities and agencies within the MSCP, offers to schools the use of parks and open space preserves for educa-

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tional purposes. Ranging from Tijuana to Temecula, the MSCP tries to incorporate on-site education with good management of sensitive habitat.

After determining the location for the program, teachers from Jefferson Elementary were then invited to participate in an on-site meeting. The idea was to establish a dedicated area within the Preserve for each school/class that would be visited year after year. Students would learn about erosion control, exotic plant removal, native plant identification and seed collection along with site preparation. The long-term field studies and restoration work by these classes help to develop a sense of ownership and stewardship. With luck, the students will be encouraged to use public trails on their own time and motivated to share their accomplishments and enthusiasm with the rest of their community.

TET's biologist, having completed bird and habitat surveys, helped with the selection of the sites. Careful considerations were made to assure that the selected sites provided adequate accessibility and the ability to manage the impact of restoration. Students and volunteers were prepared with field behavior guidelines before entering disturbed sites.

The classes began to visit the Preserve during late January through mid-March to perform their field studies and restoration projects. The introduction to the restoration projects was presented in both English and Spanish and emphasized the watershed, ecosystems and habitats, the impact of human interaction on the environment and the functions of different participating agencies to the Preserve. The CAN curriculum is designed to include field studies and related restoration work for each grade level. By March, the fourth and fifth graders at Jefferson Elementary had completed nine erosion and plant population field studies and nine restoration projects. Students collected and



*Students from Jefferson Elementary participate in the removal of non-native plants at TET's Calavera Nature Preserve in Carlsbad.*

planted native seeds, removed non-native plants, mitigated erosion sites and painted several hundred feet of fencing. Nine classes representing more than 300 students and more than 50 volunteers participated in this program.

The project resulted in a win-win situation for all those involved. Brad Rubottom's El Camino High School students were given the opportunity to act as mentors to the Jefferson Elementary students and gained satisfaction from their roles. One high school student said, "This was not what I thought it was going to be. I realized that there was something that I could share that I had learned and that there were others who looked up to me and wanted me to share that information." Students at Jefferson Elementary were equally happy with the results because they were able to make a difference in their community. Several elementary school students commented by saying, "This is important for our community. I want to come back when I am grown up and see that it still looks good. I want to show my kids what I did to make a difference." Teachers are enthusiastic because field study and restoration brings the whole unit (curriculum) together for the students. Students are able to see what all the lessons mean. Community members are also pleased with the results. One person said, "When I moved here two years ago, this place was a dump. Now because of volunteers like these, this is a great preserve again. This place is one of Carlsbad's best kept secrets."

This is the power of collaboration. Certain results are aimed for, but the benefits to all those involved is immeasurable.

For more information, please contact Donny Hunsaker at The Environmental Trust, (619) 461-8333 and/or Merle Okino O'Neill at Communities Alive In Nature, (760) 758-7908.



*Toyon (a.k.a. Christmas Berry) was just one of the many native plant species planted at the Preserve.*



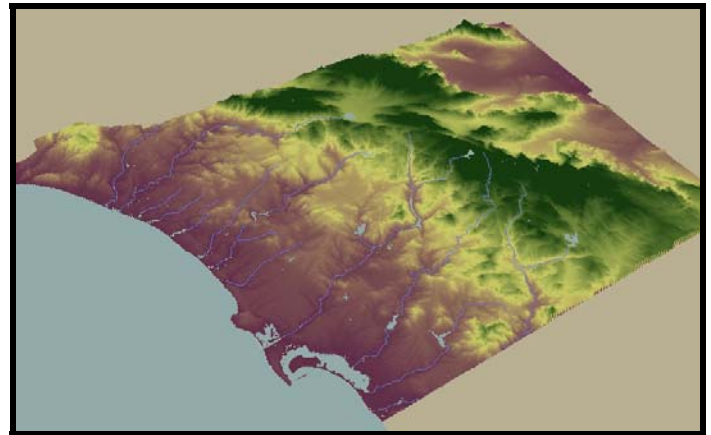


## GEOGRAPHY IN ACTION

Most people are not aware of it, but Geographic Information Systems (GIS) greatly influences our lives. GIS consists of software that helps users visualize geographic situations and problems by mapping and analyzing large amounts of spatial data. It explores spatial relationships between features, seeking patterns and answers that may not be apparent without the use of this technology, which includes advanced techniques of query, analysis, and display. GIS technology can be used for scientific investigations, resource management and development planning. Currently, the technology is being used throughout the world to solve problems related to the environment, health care, land use, economic efficiency, education and public safety, homeland security and military endeavors among other things.

Attempting to foster awareness of geography and GIS in the public, the National Geographic Society has established a new initiative called "Geography Action," an annual conservation and awareness program designed to educate people about our natural, cultural and historic treasures. This initiative incorporates two nationally recognized events: GIS Day and Geography Awareness Week. These two events aim "to promote geographic literacy in schools, communities and organizations, with a focus on the education of children." GIS Day offers a chance for professionals in GIS to share their knowledge with the public, and to engage children in learning and caring about geography. The theme for this year's events is "America's Backyard: Exploring Your Public Lands." **Geography Awareness Week will take place November 17-23, 2002. GIS Day 2002 will be held midweek, on November 20, 2002.**

Locally, GIS is used in many ways. Several departments in the County of San Diego utilize these tools. For example, the Multiple Species Conservation Program Division of the Department of Planning and Land Use utilizes GIS to analyze suitable habitat and to manage natural resources. The GIS section of the DPLU is integral in making land use decisions and the staff's quality of work is well known within the County and among other GIS professionals. Recently, Melanie Casey, GIS Analyst Trainee, was recognized for her geologic hazards analysis, which was produced with the help of the Resource Planning Division. In past years, the DPLU GIS staff has participated in GIS Day by attending local schools, and they look forward to continually sharing their enthusiasm and knowledge throughout the year. If you would like to learn more about GIS, please go to <http://www.gis.com>. To find local GIS Day events, please go to <http://gis.esri.com/gisday/search.cfm>.



*A digital elevation model offers a 3-D perspective of San Diego County. This is one of the many ways GIS helps to visualize our environment.*

## MISSION TRAILS REGIONAL PARK

One of the directives for the environmental education program at Mission Trails Regional Park (MTRP) is to educate the public about the MSCP. Therefore, MTRP offers a variety of activities aimed at enhancing the public's appreciation of the City of San Diego's open space and the unique beauty of San Diego's natural environment. Every Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday the public is invited to join

a Trail Guide for a 1.5 hour guided nature hike enabling them to learn more about the history, geology, plants, animals and ecology of the park. Other activities include a walk through MTRP's native plant garden, a tracking adventure for beginners, bird walks, and more. At MTRP, you will find something for the entire family to enjoy. For more information, please visit the MTRP website at [www.mtrp.org](http://www.mtrp.org).



## DISCOVER STELZER PARK

By Patricia Heyden, County of San Diego Parks and Recreation



Louis A. Stelzer Park is a 364-acre County Park located on Wildcat Canyon Road in Lakeside. The land was left to the County to be used as a place for children to go outdoors and experience natural wonders. A fund was also set up to provide transportation and supplies for an educational program. Hence, the "Discovery Program" at Stelzer Park was born.

The Discovery Program involves teachers from throughout San Diego County and offers them the opportunity to have their students transported to the park free-of-charge for a day of Environmental Education. The teachers first spend a Saturday at a free training session that familiarizes them with the park and the program. Grade and topic specific curriculum, which is correlated to the California Science Framework, has been developed to aid the teachers in educating the students. Subject matter includes nature awareness, general ecology, plants, geology, birding and Native Americans of San Diego County.

On average, 10,000 students take part in this program each year. Recently, information about the MSCP was incorporated into the materials to help students better understand their natural surroundings and efforts being taken to save it.

During one Discovery Program event, a young girl was frightened by a Swallowtail butterfly that flew so closely to her; by the end of the day she was hoping to see more. Several days later the students sent me drawings of their experience, and I received from her a drawing with a beautiful butterfly inside a heart.



Swallowtail butterfly,  
Copyright Fred Parker

To take advantage of this wonderful opportunity, teachers must call (619) 390-7998 to register for a training session. The next session will take place Saturday, November 9th from 8:00 am until 1:00 pm.

## BEGIN NOW - POLLUTION PREVENTION

By Marsha Cook, County of San Diego Department of Environmental Health



Pollution prevention involves protecting the environment through reducing the amount of pollution that is generated in the home, in the workplace, in the garden, and on the road. All of these changes help protect our environment and habitat for endangered species, so begin now! Together, we can make a difference!

At home and at the workplace, save energy by turning off lights in areas that are not in use. If you are considering new appliances, consider those that are the most energy efficient. Saving energy will not only help reduce air pollution, but it will also put some money back in your pocket! Recycling paper, plastic, glass, and aluminum helps to reduce waste going into our landfills! The less waste we generate, the fewer landfills are needed. If you think about the

amount of space landfills take up, think of the space that may be saved by recycling! For information on recycling or disposal of household hazardous waste call (877) R-1 EARTH.

Do your part in the garden by composting food scraps from your kitchen. Compost is "black gold" for your garden! Turn your garden into a pollution free paradise by introducing "friendly" insects such as ladybugs, lacewings and ground beetles to rid your garden of uninvited pests.

Pollution prevention on the road means driving less and using alternative forms of transportation. Try carpooling, riding the bus, or riding your bicycle! Call (800) COMMUTE or (800) 697-POOL for a listing of potential carpoolers in your area.

Small changes add up. By starting new habits, we can help to preserve our air, water and open space for future generations to come to enjoy. Begin Now!



## MSCP - CELEBRATING 5 YEARS OF SUCCESSFUL CONSERVATION



On October 22, 1997, the Board of Supervisors approved the 50-year MSCP Plan. During the last five years, the preserve has grown and the County is well on its way to meeting its conservation goals. The MSCP looks forward to another 45 years of successful conservation and to the planning and implementation of the North County and East County Subarea Plans. Thank you to all our partners in preservation who have helped make this program a success!

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